

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OPR-02 SY-05 SCCT-01 A-01 IO-10 /094 W

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R 101208Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2945

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: CORSICA QUIETS DOWN

REF: PARIS 22349

1. SUMMARY. THE SITUATION IN CORSICA IS CALM, DUE MAINLY TO THE INITIATION OF PROMISED ECONOMIC MEASURES ON THE PART OF GOF AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW, NATIVE-CORSICAN PREFECT. PARTY POSITIONS TOWARDS THE PROBLEM HAVE HARDENED TO WHERE THEY ARE NOW DISTINCT FROM ONE ANOTHER. FINALLY, INTERIOR MINISTER PONIATOWSKI IS UNDER FIRE FOR HIS ALLEGED MISHANDLING OF SITUATION. THE PROBLEM IS OF CONTINUING CONCERN TO THE AVERAGE FRENCH-MAN, AND GOF RECOGNIZES THAT IT MUST ACT QUICKLY IF  
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FURTHER TROUBLE IS TO BE AVOIDED. END SUMMARY

2. THE SITUATION IN CORSICA HAS QUIETED TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS OUT OF THE HEADLINES, ALTHOUGH IT REMAINS A KEY GOVERNMENT CONCERN. A BOMB OCCASIONALLY GOES OFF ON THE ISLAND, A DEMONSTRATOR IS OCCASIONALLY ARRESTED IN CONTINENTAL FRANCE; BUT CALM HAS RETURNED TO BASTIA. THIS IS NO DOUBT PARTLY DUE TO MEASURES TAKEN BY GOF; A CREDIT OF \$7,000,000 TO GET THE MORIBUND CORSICAN ECONOMY ON ITS FEET; FACTFINDING VISITS ON THE PART OF OFFICIALS; AN APPARENTLY SINCERE EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT TO "UNDERSTAND" THE PROBLEM; THE NAMING OF A NEW, NATIVE-CORSICAN PREFECT. THIS LAST MEASURE, IN PART PSYCHOLOGICAL, HAS HAD PERHAPS THE MOST IMMEDIATE EFFECT IN DEFUSING EVENTS. JEAN RIOLACCI IS A NATIVE CORSICAN WHO IS NOT CONSIDERED A TURNCOAT BY HIS NEW CONSTITUENTS -- AS ARE THE THREE CORSICAN DEPUTIES -- AND WHO IS ATTEMPTING TO SEE VIRTUALLY EVERY IMPORTANT LOCAL POLITICIAN IN AN EFFORT TO BRING PERMANENT STABILITY TO THE ISLAND. PERHAPS THE GOOD WILL HE ENJOYS IS DUE MAINLY TO THE FACT THAT HE HAS NEVER SERVED IN CORSICA.

3. MEANWHILE, PARTY POSITIONS TOWARDS THE ISSUE HAVE CRYSTALIZED AND HARDENED. THE GAULLISTS (UDR) ARE FOR THE UNEQUIVOCAL MAINTENANCE OF CENTRALIZATION. THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS ARE MORE ACCOMMODATING TO THE WISHES OF THE AUTONOMISTS, BUT NOT MUCH. THEY FAVOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CORSICA AND "RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMATE COMPLAINTS" OF THE ISLANDERS. THE CENTRISTS HAVE TAKEN NO UNIFIED STAND, THOUGH MINISTER OF JUSTICE LECANUET HAS, IN HIS OFFICIAL (NON-PARTY) CAPACITY, DRAWN A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN POLITICAL REGIONALISM (WHICH HE IS AGAINST) AND ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION (WHICH HE FAVORS). THE SOCIALIST PARTY FAVORS LOCAL AID UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CORSICANS THEMSELVES AND REGIONAL COUNCILS ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, WHILE

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THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF) TAKES THE HARDEST LINE OF ALL: CORSICA IS A DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE, IT MUST REMAIN SUCH, IT MUST BE TREATED DIFFERENTLY FROM NO OTHER DEPARTMENT. "THE IDEAS OF THE AUTONOMISTS ARE WORSE THAN DANGEROUS" HEADLINED HUMANITE LAST WEEK. DESPITE, HOWEVER, THE SIMILARITY OF PCF VIEWS TO THOSE OF THE UDR, THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNISTS HAS BEEN MOST STRIDENT IN CONDEMNING PONIATOWSKI'S METHODS AND HAS DEMANDED HIS RESIGNATION.

4. COMMENT. THE ATMOSPHERE IN FRANCE NOW THAT CORSICA HAS DIED DOWN IS ONE OF MILD SHOCK, STRONGLY AKIN TO THAT FOLLOWING KENT STATE IN THE UNITED STATES. TIME  
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AND AGAIN LOCAL PRESS REFERS TO THE TRAGEDY OF FRENCHMEN FIRING UPON FRENCHMEN. YET THE AVERAGE "CONTINENTAL" IS HIMSELF AS LITTLE CONCERNED WITH THE REAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF CORSICA AS USUAL, AND GENERALLY DISMISSES THE CHAOS AS DUE TO CORSICAN TEMPERAMENT RATHER THAN JUSTIFIED GRIPE. A RECENT SOFRES POLL SHOWS ONLY 2 PERCENT OF CORSICANS FOR ACTUAL INDEPENDENCE AND 38 PERCENT FOR AUTONOMY. A HEALTHY 55 PERCENT ARE FOR NO CHANGE WHATSOEVER IN THE STATUS QUO. THE PROPORTION FOR AUTONOMY, HOWEVER, COULD EASILY INCREASE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MORE VIOLENCE. FURTHERMORE CORSICA HAS SET THE

TONE FOR INCREASED ACTIVITY IN THE VARIOUS AUTONOMIST OR  
INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT FRANCE. THE BASQUES  
AND THE BRETONS HAVE BOTH MANIFESTED, AND HAVE BEGUN TO  
USE THE KIND OF "NON NEGOTIABLE" LANGUAGE OF THE SIMEONI  
BROTHERS. IN THE CASE OF CORSICA AT LEAST, THE CONTINEN-  
TALS HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE.  
RUSH

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 SEP 1975  
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**Subject:** CORSICA QUIETS DOWN  
**TAGS:** PINT, FR  
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**Type:** TE  
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